

Gettysburg Borough Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes 12/14/21

The regularly scheduled December meeting of the Shade Tree Commission was held on Tuesday, December 14, at 7:00 pm at the Borough office. Present: David Rice, Chair; Martin Jolin, member; Susan Naugle, Member; Rob Harbaugh, Borough Public Works Director; and Trevor Redding. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

MINUTES: Following a reading of the October 12 meeting minutes, the minutes were accepted as presented.

TREE PLANTINGS AND MAINTENANCE WORK: Rob Harbaugh updated the Commission on the tree plantings approved at the prior meeting and year-end tree maintenance by Cumberland Valley Tree Service. The four Zelkovas were successfully planted on the square. Other trees planted were Armstrong Maple at 140 York St., Autumn Gold Ginkgo at 306 York St., Red Maple at 445 Steinwehr Ave., and Zelkova on Hanover St. at the Sunoco. Root barriers were used on all plantings. Trees for 212 York and 133-137 E. Middle will require concrete cutting and will have to wait until spring. London Plane trees were not available for Breckenridge St. at Rec Park and will also be planted in the spring. Rob is still looking at the 222 Buford Ave. location to determine if there is sufficient space in the Borough right-of-way

Cumberland Valley Tree Service completed pruning work, removed stumps on the square and at other locations. They also removed trees on Fourth St at Dial Tile and at Howard and Hay and will grind stumps later.

Rob reported that approximately \$900 remains in the 2021 Shade Tree budget.

UTILITY COMPANY TREE MAINTENANCE: Rob reported that the contractor for Met Ed has been working throughout the Borough but will not finish this year. The Met Ed arborist has been in contact with him. Trevor noted that some trees on Washington Street have been topped which may cause the weight of the tree to be over the street. Trimming is better than in the past but still negatively impacts the natural shape of trees.

2022 BUDGET: Susan reported she checked the budget approved by Council last evening and confirmed the Shade Tree budget was increased to \$17,500.

SIDEWALK DAMAGE: David reported he was deposed, as Chair of the Commission, for a law suit involving a 2017 injury when someone tripped on a sidewalk raised by street tree roots. Questions centered on whether the property owner had submitted any requests regarding tree removal. Commission members discussed the need for sidewalk repair related to tree damage. Per Borough ordinance, the property owner is responsible for repair and maintenance of sidewalks. Susan offered that the Borough had been working on updating the Sidewalk Ordinance but that has yet to happen. Rob advised that funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) could possibly be used to make sidewalk repairs that will bring the sidewalk into compliance with ADA requirements. Trevor noted caution is needed when cutting large amount of a tree's root system to repair sidewalks because it is destabilizing.

Susan noted that Carlisle Borough seems to maintain their sidewalks lined with mature Oaks. She will contact Carlisle to see how they handle street trees and related sidewalk maintenance.

David suggested that maybe some sidewalks could be rerouted to go around the offending roots. Rob thought that might require an easement since it would be outside the Borough ROW. Martin suggested we should approach Council about using Borough funds to repair or move sidewalks damaged by street tree roots.

2022 TREE PLANTING – David advised we will need to approve plantings for Spring 2022 at our February meeting and suggested we begin with the list he provided in October. This will include the trees at Rec Park along Breckenridge St., trees at St. James Lutheran, and a purple Plum for 36 E. Middle St. Plantings can also include those locations that will require sidewalk cutting. David would like to see more trees along Buford Ave. This may be somewhat limited by the ADA requirement for a minimum of 4 feet sidewalk width.

Martin asked if plans for construction along Water and Fourth Streets include tree planting. Contact will need to be made with the Borough Planning Department to check on the status.

Commission members discussed options for covering tree wells including using river rock instead of mulch and a product made from recycled tires – perkEpave <https://perkepave.com/>.

Trevor offered to do some “structural pruning” on some of the newer plantings to help shape trees. The Commission agreed this would be good while the tree is small.

2022 MEETING DATES: The Commission agreed to retain the current meeting schedule – Every other month, second Tuesday, 7 PM, except for October when we will meet on the second Wednesday. Dates are Feb 8, April 12, June 14, Aug. 9, Oct. 12, and Dec. 13. Susan will advise the Borough Secretary of the dates for publication in the Gettysburg Times.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Borough received a request to check out a tree which is reportedly dropping limbs into Stevens Run. The tree is located on private property at 351 W. Middle St. The Planning Department requested an assessment of the tree’s health before referring it to Code Enforcement. Trevor offered to assess the tree to see if it presents a hazard and report to Rob and David.

Having no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm

Minutes prepared by Susan Naugle 01-10-2022